

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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R 251002Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4566
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION USNATO

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BELGRADE ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, CSCE, XF, CZ
SUBJECT: THE BULGARIAN VIEW FROM PRAGUE

REFS A. PRAGUE 0149 B. PRAGUE 0082

SUMMARY: BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR CHRISTO SHANOV SHARED HIS VIEWS
ON CZECHOSLOVAK POLITICS, PROGRESS OF BELGRADE TALKS AND MIDDLE
EAST IN A FRIENDLY IF SOMEWHAT GUARDED CONVERSATION WITH ME
JANUARY 24. END SUMMARY.

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1. CZECHOSLOVAK POLITICS-CITING RUMORS I HAD HEARD ABOUT REASONS
FOR POSTING OF JAROSLAV HEJNA TO SOFIA (REF A), I ASKED SHANOV
ABOUT LEADERSHIP SITUATION AND HUSAK'S POSITION IN PARTICULAR.
WHETHER SHANOV HAD BEEN PRIMED FOR MY QUESTION OR WAS SPEAKING
WITH SOME CANDOR IS HARD TO JUDGE, BUT HE TOLD ME HE HAD KNOWN
OF IMPENDING ASSIGNMENT OF HEJNA TO SOFIA FOR A LONG TIME,

AT LEAST BEFORE HIS OWN ARRIVAL IN PRAGUE SOME TWO MONTHS AGO. WHILE HE ADMITTED HAVING HEARD FROM WESTERN COLLEAGUES RUMORS OF A CHALLENGE TO HUSAK, HE SAID HE KNEW NOTHING OF A LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE, AND EXPLAINED THAT WHILE HUSAK HAD INDEED BEEN DEALT A BLOW BY THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE, HE WAS STILL FIRMLY IN COMMAND AND IN GOOD SHAPE AS EVIDENCED BY HIS APPEARANCE WHEN HE GREETED THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND OTHERS JANUARY 10(REF B). AS FOR HEJNA'S ASSIGNMENT TO SOFIA, IT HAD TAKEN A LONG TIME TO ARRANGE BECAUSE HEJNA HAD HAD TO BREAK IN HIS SUCCESSOR AS CHAIRMAN OF THE SOUTH BOHEMIAN REGIONAL COMMITTEE. COMMENT: WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THIS EXPLANATION, AS HEJNA' S SUCCESSOR WAS ALREADY A SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE. END COMMENT.

2. CC TO MEET-SHANOV SAID CPCZ CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS SCHEDULED TO HAVE AN "IMPORTANT" MEETING IN MARCH TO "REEVALUATE" PROGRESS OF THE CURRENT FIVE-YEAR PLAN, BUT HE DID NOT ADMIT TO ANY KNOWLEDGE OF A SPECIAL TOP-LEVEL PARTY MEETING AS PRC EMBASSY HAS BEEN PUTTING OUT (PRAGUE 0172).

3. BELGRADE TALKS-SHANOV WAS AWARE OF THE DEBATE OF THE FINAL CONFERENCE DOCUMENT IN BELGRADE, ALTHOUGH HE SAYS HE DOES NOT FOLLOW NEWS FROM BELGRADE TERRIBLY CLOSELY. HE TOLD ME HE EXPECTED THE DEBATE OVER THE DOCUMENT TO BE "VERY LONG," DRAGGING THE MEETING OUT UNTIL LATE MARCH, BUT THAT IN THE END A COMPROMISE WOULD BE REACHED. I GOT THE IMPRESSION HE VIEWED SOVIET INTRANSIGENCE AS DELIBERATE BARGAINING TACTICS.
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4. MIDDLE EAST-IN THE COURSE OF A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION, SHANOV SAID HE AND OTHER EAST BLOC TYPES HAD BEEN EXPECTING EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT TO RESIGN WHEN HE ADDRESSED THE EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENT, BUT THAT "PRESIDENT CARTER TALKED HIM OUT OF IT BY TELEPHONE." WE DO NOT KNOW QUITE WHAT TO MAKE OF THIS STATEMENT, BUT REPORT IT AS POSSIBLY OF INTEREST

"DECONTROLLED AFTER FOUR YEARS FROM ORIGINATING DATE."
BYRNE

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